

in the country legally. This amendment would have harmed elderly or disabled individuals who would be impoverished despite having paid into the Social Security system for many years and would deny innocent American children who are born to these workers survivor benefits, regardless of how long their mother or father worked and paid taxes in the United States. In addition, the Ensign amendment would have forced taxpayers to pay more for the means-tested welfare programs to which these impoverished individuals would have had to turn. For these reasons, I opposed the Ensign amendment, and I am pleased that the majority of my colleagues did as well.

Mr. President, the end result of several weeks of hard work is bipartisan, compromise legislation that will bring meaningful reforms to a system that has long been broken. The bill is far from perfect, but on balance, I believe it is a victory for supporters of comprehensive reform. But as the saying goes, it ain't over 'til it's over. In order for this legislation to become law, we need our colleagues in the House to work with the Senate during the conference committee process and to adopt a comprehensive approach to this issue. And we need the President, who has come out in favor of comprehensive reform, to stay invested in this process. He has spoken, but now he must act. We will need his help in convincing members of the House to abandon ill-conceived notions like criminalizing undocumented people and those who provide humanitarian support to them, and chiseling away at due process rights. The President's leadership, and the willingness of House leaders to work with the Senate, will be crucial in order to retain the important reform provisions contained in this bill during the conference process.

This is a defining moment for America, and I am hopeful that the Senate, the House, and the President will work together so that we can build on this success and enact a comprehensive reform bill by the end of this Congress.

COSPONSORSHIP OF S. 1112

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I would like to lend my support to S. 1112, the College 529 Invest Act of 2005, which I cosponsored today. A college education is more important today than it has ever been before. As the intrinsic value of a college education has increased, so too has the financial costs associated with it. In the last 10 years, the cost of a 4-year college education at a public institution increased 59 percent, while in public institutions it has grown by 42 percent. This increased cost dramatically outpaces average family income growth during the same time period.

It is not surprising that Montanans have expressed concerns about how they will pay such a hefty pricetag for their children's futures. It is our responsibility in the Senate to make sav-

ing for college manageable for many families who also struggle to save for their own retirement and may live from paycheck to paycheck. Federal programs can defray some of the costs, but this alone cannot pay the bills. Tax relief passed in 2001 permitted States to implement their own plans, creating a tax benefit for those families who chose to invest in them. Since 1998, 12,539 qualified tuition program accounts total more than \$146 million in Montana alone.

Without congressional action, the tax benefits of these plans will expire in 2010. Withdrawals made after 2010 will be subjected to taxation that means in just a little over 3 years from now, parents who invested in these 529 plans for the tax benefits will face an unanticipated tax liability. This sunset provision casts serious doubt on the likelihood a family would set up a 529 plan given such uncertainty. S. 1112 would make the tax provisions of these important plans permanent, providing much-needed certainty to parents and their children heading off to college in the future.

HOLD ON NOMINATION OF DAVID BERNHARDT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to attempt, once again, to raise awareness of the plight of countless rural communities due to the impending expiration of the Secure Rural Schools and County Self-Determination Act. I regret that the lack of concern at the White House and the inertia in Congress forces me to put a hold on David Bernhardt, the administration's nominee for Interior Solicitor. It is time for everyone to focus their attention on the needs of the more than 700 rural counties in over 40 States that are depending on the reauthorization of this county payments legislation.

Thus far, the administration's solution to funding county payments is unacceptable. The county payments law, which provides a stable revenue source for education, roads, and other county services in rural areas, is due to expire at the end of this year. In early 2005, I coauthored a bipartisan bill, S. 267, to reauthorize county payments for another 7 years. The bill has 26 Senate cosponsors. In February, the administration proposed reauthorizing the law for only 5 years while cutting funding by 60 percent and funding that reduced portion with a controversial Federal land sale scheme. In response, Senator BAUCUS proposed a sensible, alternative funding source for county payments, a proposal which I was pleased to cosponsor. Our legislation fully funds county payments by ensuring that a portion of Federal taxes are withheld from payments by the Federal Government to government contractors. The Federal Government currently does not withhold taxes when it pays government contractors. Recently, however, over my objections, Congress approved a major tax bill that uses the Baucus

proposal to instead provide tax cuts for this country's most fortunate few. This lack of regard for the historic obligations of the Federal Government to rural counties severs a vitally important funding lifeline to communities throughout the country.

I will hold this nominee—and many nominees coming after him, if need be—until the administration finds an acceptable way to fund county payments.

DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE 2006

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Do the Write Thing Challenge, or DtWT, is a national program that gives middle school students the opportunity to reflect on and express themselves about youth violence in their communities. DtWT combines classroom discussion with a writing contest that focuses on personal responsibility in solving youth violence problems. Since it was created in 1994, more than 350,000 middle school students have participated in DtWT activities, and the program has grown to include participants from 28 different jurisdictions, including Detroit, MI.

In 2005, more than 32,000 students participated in the DtWT writing contest. To participate, students are asked to write an essay, poem, play, or song that addresses the impact of violence on their life, the causes of youth violence, and the things that they can do to prevent youth violence around them. As part of their participation in the contest, students are also asked to make a personal commitment that they will put their thoughts into action by working to help stop youth violence in their daily lives.

Each year, a DtWT Committee made up of community, business, and governmental leaders from each participating jurisdiction reviews the writing submissions of the students and picks two national finalists, one boy and one girl, from their area. I am pleased to recognize this year's national finalists from Detroit, Demetrius Adams and Tiffini Baldwin, for their outstanding work and dedication to the prevention of youth violence.

Both Demetrius and Tiffini wrote about the serious effect that guns, gangs, and drugs can have on the lives of teenagers. Their writings demonstrate a deep understanding of the impact that a single act of violence can have on an entire community. I am impressed by the maturity they have shown in their work and congratulate them on being selected as national finalists.

In July, Demetrius and Tiffini will join the other DtWT national finalists in Washington, DC, for National Recognition Week. During the week's activities, the national finalists will attend a recognition ceremony and have their work permanently placed in the Library of Congress. In addition, they will have the opportunity to share

their thoughts on youth violence with Members of Congress and other policymakers. In the past, students have had the opportunity to meet with the Secretary of Education, the Attorney General, and other representatives from the Department of Justice.

I know my colleagues join me in celebrating the work of all of the DtWT participants from around the country. I would also like to thank the DtWT organizers for their commitment to engaging with and educating children about nonviolence. Their important efforts help to increase awareness of the issue and facilitate the development of local solutions to the youth violence problem in our Nation.

While it is important that we recognize the hard work of the DtWT participants and organizers, it is also important that we support their efforts through our actions in the Senate. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting legislation that would help prevent youth violence by increasing the number of police officers on our streets, by increasing resources for school and community violence prevention programs, and by making it more difficult for children and criminals to acquire dangerous firearms.

REVEREND WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to remember my friend Rev. William Sloane Coffin who passed away in Vermont on April 12, 2006, at his home in Strafford.

Bill Coffin was an extraordinary man who leaves behind a legacy of inspired service for social justice that few Americans have matched. He dedicated his life to speaking out on behalf of those who would otherwise be forgotten, to improving the lives of the underprivileged, and to calling for justice for victims of discrimination in our society.

As chaplain of Yale University, Bill used that pulpit like none before him, to serve not only the Yale community but to inspire the entire Nation. While many Senators may remember him best for his moral leadership and courageous activism during the Vietnam War, Bill also established himself as a dedicated leader for racial and social justice. He was a member of the Freedom Riders who rode interstate buses in the South to challenge segregation laws. He was a visionary and powerful leader in pointing out the hypocrisy of religious and sexual discrimination.

Mr. Gary Trudeau, creator of the cartoon "Doonesbury" and fellow Yale graduate, may have immortalized Bill Coffin in his Reverend Sloan character. But that was only one chapter of a lifetime of using his ministry to fight injustice. After his long service at Yale, Bill became pastor of Riverside Church in New York City where he continued to advocate for the downtrodden all over the world. Bill continued to be a forceful presence for good long after he left Riverside.

Mr. President, Vermonters were fortunate to have Bill Coffin as a resident of our unique State. Vermonters have a long history of independent thought, of standing up for what is right, and Bill Coffin set a standard for all of us. I was privileged to know him personally and to be able to call him a friend. I know his other friends and neighbors felt the same way. We were all made better, and felt better about ourselves, when we were in the company of Bill Coffin.

I ask unanimous consent that a column by William F. Buckley and an editorial in the Valley News be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that other Senators may have a further appreciation of this great and good man.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Valley News, April 14, 2006]

WILLIAM S. COFFIN

The Upper Valley has its share of accomplished and prominent residents, but we can think of few whose presence seemed such a gift as did that of The Rev. William Sloane Coffin, who lived here full time from the late 1980s until his death Wednesday at his home in Strafford.

The Upper Valley phase of Coffin's life showcased the same devotion to social justice as his earlier chapters as pastor of Riverside Church in New York City and chaplain of Yale University. His focus shifted somewhat—the Vietnam War and black Americans' civil rights while he worked in New Haven, Conn., and New York City; nuclear disarmament, gay Americans' civil rights and the environment while in Vermont—but the larger theme remained constant. He was committed to speaking truth to power, and he did that by talking about the issues of the day with striking clarity and wisdom.

One of the last op-eds he wrote for the Valley News appeared just a few weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks, and reviewing it now, more than four years later, makes us wish it had had more of an impact in guiding this nation's leaders about the topic at hand—how to best respond to terrorism.

"What Americans do realize now," Coffin wrote, "is that life can change on a dime. On Sept. 11, we lost, and lost forever, our sense of invulnerability and invincibility. Hard as that may be, let us not grieve their passing; they were illusions."

"Today it is the Devil's strategy to persuade Americans to let go of the good to fight evil. I hope we will resist. I hope that first we will present to the world conclusive evidence of whom these hijackers were, from whence they came, and who knowingly harbored them."

"Then I hope we shall try to build international consensus for appropriate measures, both to halt the violence and the circumstances that gave rise to it."

Here in the Upper Valley, though, we had the opportunity not only to appreciate the power of Coffin's message but also to witness the force of his personality. Whether at a dining room table, behind a church pulpit, at a piano or on a stage at a political rally, Coffin commanded, enjoyed and rewarded attention. The message was difficult to separate from the virtuoso performance of high-spiritedness, humor and insight. Not even a failing body, including the slurred speech left in the wake of a stroke, blunted the force of his personality. Strafford Selectwoman Kay Campbell had it just right when she noted that Coffin, despite his national stature, had a knack for "treating us like we were all special."

Bill Coffin was an accomplished, amazing and fascinating man, and many Upper Valley residents feel blessed not just to have benefited from his wisdom but for the opportunity of seeing him in action.

[From Yale Daily News, Apr. 14, 2006]

COFFIN'S PASSION TOPPED IDEOLOGY

(By William F. Buckley, Jr.)

It was the routine, when Charles Seymour was president of Yale, that the chairman (as we were then designated) of the News should visit with President Seymour for a half hour every week, mutual conduits for information in both directions. We became friends and he told me at one meeting with some enthusiasm that the student speaker at the annual Alumni Day lunch at the Freshman Commons the day before "gave the single most eloquent talk I have ever heard from an undergraduate." I thought hard about that comment one year later when I was selected to give the annual talk to the alumni, which speech moved nobody at all because the day before, the text having been examined by public relations director Richard Lee, I was asked to be so kind as to withdraw; and I did. (What I did with the speech was stick it into the appendix of "God and Man at Yale").

I didn't meet William Sloane Coffin '49 DIV '56 until some while later, when of course I congratulated him on electing the correct political extremity in the controversies of the day. He was never slow to catch an irony, and his wink brought on a trans-ideological friendship that induced great pleasure.

The friendship was publicly confirmed by Coffin with an extraordinary gesture. Garry Trudeau '70 ART '73 was lining up speakers for an event celebrating the reunion of his class. His reunion coincided with a reunion of my own class, and he came to me and asked if I would consent to debate with Bill Coffin as I had done for Trudeau's class in freshman year.

Well, I said, okay, though I knew that Charles Seymour's estimate of successful speakers would certainly prevail yet again. But there was a remarkable feature of that afternoon. I climbed the steps at the Yale Law School Auditorium to extend a hand to Bill Coffin—who brushed it aside and embraced me with both arms. This was a dramatic act. It was testimony not only to Coffin's wide Christian gateway to the unfaithful, but also to his extraordinary histrionic skills. I'd have lost the argument anyway. I have defended my political faith as often as Coffin did his own, but you cannot, in the end, win an argument against someone who is offering free health care and an end to nuclear bombs. But there was never any hope for survival after his public embrace.

We were always, however lightly, in touch. "Sweet William," he addressed me in June 2003, enclosing a copy of a speech he had delivered at Yale the week before. "The enclosed speech to the Class of '68, you will be sorry to hear, was received with tumultuous applause. Don't worry, however, you, alas, represent the ruling view. I hope you feel with Saint Paul, 'Though our outer nature is wasted away our inner nature is being renewed each day.' Affectionately as always, Bill."

I replied "Wm, I am not surprised your speech was greeted by tumultuous applause. That is what demagoguery is designed to do, dear William." He replied some months later, enclosing a copy of a page from the Boston Globe in which both of us were quoted. "Dear Wm, Could it be that in this time and our old age that we might be on the same page? Do let me know, affectionately, Bill."

I replied that I had seen his new book *Letters to a Young Doubter*. "... I think of you